

## **The Proposed United States Bicycle Route 37 in Indiana**

### **Overview**

Originally established in 1978, a United States Bicycle Route (USBR) is the designation of a long-distance bicycle route consisting of a wide range of facilities such as city streets, low-traffic county roads, separated multi-use paths, trails, and on-street bicycle facilities. Each USBR has segments where bicyclists travel with vehicular traffic, and each facility is maintained by its respective jurisdiction (state/local governments, local trail organizations, etc.).

USBR applications are ultimately approved by the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO), the same body that coordinates the numbering of Interstate highways and US Routes. AASHTO's Special Committee on US Route Numbering has designated over 18,000 contiguous miles of USBR in 34 states across the nation, including more than 700 miles of designated USBRs in Indiana.

USBRs are for experienced, long-distance bicycle riders — generally considered “touring cyclists” — who are comfortable riding on most types of facilities, including roads without dedicated infrastructure for bicyclists. This group also consists of utilitarian and recreational riders who are confident enough to ride on busy roadways and navigate in vehicular traffic.

To submit a USBR application to AASHTO, State DOTs must confirm that all relevant local jurisdictions support the proposed route. The application must also include a route-specific map (turn by turn – listing roads, streets, and trails). In Indiana, the official policy for the designation of a USBR is in the early conceptual stages, however, INDOT has received Letters of Support from local jurisdictions along the proposed USBR 37. These jurisdictions have determined that the designated route and intersections it includes are deemed safe and suitable for experienced bicyclists to travel.

### **USBR 37**

The proposed USBR 37 stretches approximately 182 miles from Griffith, IN to Carmel, IN (See Appendix A). The route's northern terminus connects USBR 36 on the Erie Lackawanna Trail in northwest Indiana through Lafayette and Lebanon, before reaching its southern terminus, connecting with USBR 35 on the Monon Trail in Hamilton County. The designation efforts for this route were led by Adventure Cycling Association (ACA) working with local and regional bicycling advocates.

For state-owned facilities, INDOT District Offices examined where the proposed route intersects with state-owned facilities to identify any potential traffic safety concerns (listed in Appendix A). Appendix A identifies where the proposed route interacts with state roads, US highways, and interstates, noting if the intersection is at-grade or includes an underpass or bridge.

There is no cost for designating a USBR, as infrastructure investment and signage are not required. There are several opportunities for the designated route to be guided such as indicating routes on existing state and local paper/digital maps, downloadable GPS coordinates and even the potential for signage or pavement markings in the future. According to Adventure Cycling Association, the designation of a US Bicycle Route signifies that a route is officially recognized with a route number and may be signed or marked accordingly.

### **Advantages/Disadvantages**

#### **Advantages:**

- Improve relationships between INDOT and local jurisdictions and bicycle enthusiasts
- Give INDOT insight on how many Hoosiers and tourists are utilizing bicycle routes
- Promote active transportation and healthier lifestyles in the state of Indiana
- Influence future road/network improvement design ideas
- Increased revenue for local jurisdictions due to tourism
- Begin to set a precedent for bicycling in the state
- Potential to reduce automobile congestion and improve air quality

#### **Disadvantages:**

- Potential safety risks
- Uncertainty on how best to educate motorists about road safety and sharing the road
- Uncertainty on how much use USBR 37 will generate and how that may impact road congestion

### **INDOT's Position**

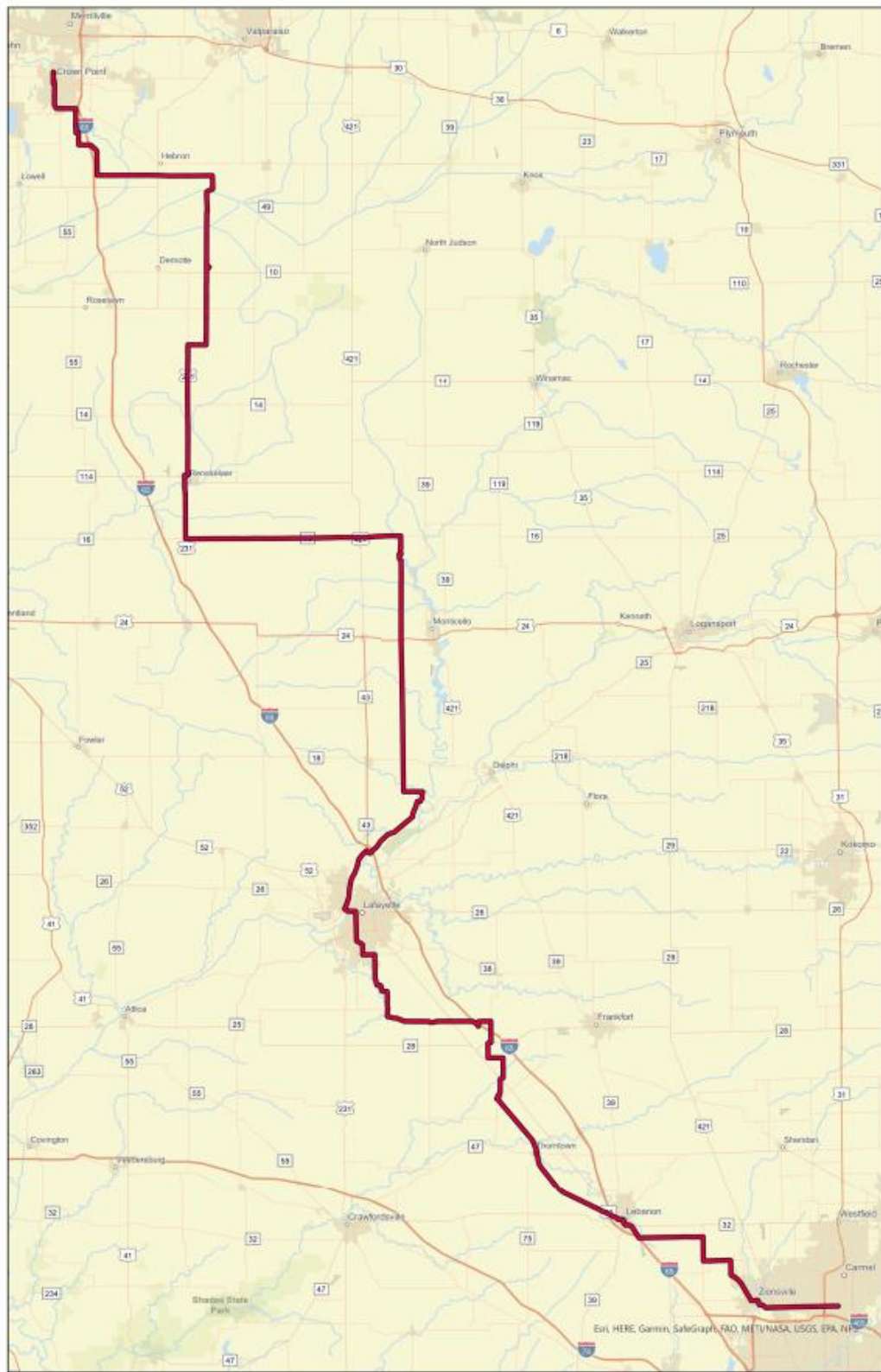
INDOT has not yet officially endorsed USBR 37, however an application has been submitted to AASHTO pending public comment and Executive approval. INDOT will carefully examine the associated benefits and risks of designation before making a final decision.

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**Appendix A: Map of the Proposed USBR 37**



**Appendix B: Intersections with State Facilities and the Proposed USBR 37**

<b>Intersection Name</b>	<b>Approximate location</b>	<b>Intersection Type</b>
E. U.S. 20 x Erie Lackawanna Trail	between Schererville and Merrillville	Tunnel
U.S. 231 x N. West St	Crown Point	4-way at-grade intersection
S.R. 55 x W. 129th Ave	Crown Point	4-way at-grade intersection
U.S. 65 x E. 153rd Ave	Southeast Grove	Bridge
S.R. 2/U.S. 231 x W. 900 S	Hebron	4-way at-grade intersection
S.R. 10 x County Rd 400 W	Stoutsburg	4-way at-grade intersection
U.S. 421 x W. Broadway St	Monon	4-way at-grade intersection
U.S. 421 x S. 300 E	between Reynolds and Monticello	4-way at-grade intersection
U.S. 65 x N. 9th St Rd	Battle Ground	Underpass
U.S. 52 x N. River Rd	Bar Berry Heights	Underpass
U.S. 52 x E. 900 S	Stockwell	4-way at-grade intersection
U.S. 65 x S. County Rd 1000 W	Fickle	Bridge
U.S. 65 x S. Co Rd 900 W	Fickle	Bridge
U.S. 52 x S. Broadview Rd	Colfax	4-way at-grade intersection
U.S. 47 x Pearl Street	Thorntown	4-way at-grade intersection
U.S. 65/52 x Farm Heritage Trail	Lebanon	Underpass
S.R. 32 x S. West St	Lebanon	4-way at-grade intersection
S.R. 39 x W. Elm St	Lebanon	4-way at-grade intersection
U.S. 421 x 106th St	Zionsville	4-way at-grade intersection
U.S. 31 x 106th St	Carmel	Underpass